

Amended Claims

of August 27, 2004

1. A panel element having a utilization side (11), a counter draw (12) opposite the utilization side (11), a first longitudinal side (13) having a tongue (2), a second longitudinal side (14) which is located opposite the first longitudinal side (13) and has a groove (3) with a contour opposite to that of tongue (2), tongue (2) having a first projection (21) extending beyond the utilization side (11) in a first direction parallel to the utilization side (11) and normal to the longitudinal direction of tongue (2), in the region of the counter draw (12) tongue (2) having a second projection (22) extending in the first direction, a first undercut (23) being formed between the first projection (21) and the second projection (22), groove (3) having a third projection (31) extending beyond the counter draw (12) in the first direction; and for creating a tongue and groove joint tongue (2) being attached in an inclined fashion to groove (3) of another similar panel element and substantially on account of a rotary motion the tongue and groove joint being established by locking tongue (2) in groove (3) of the other similar panel element, **characterized in that** the second projection (22) of tongue (2) can be locked with the third projection (31) of groove (3) of the other similar panel element and a semi-plastic deformation of the second projection (22) of tongue (2) and/or the third projection (31) of groove (3) of the other similar panel occurs during locking.

2. The panel element according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the first undercut (23) has a constriction in its opening (24) region.

3. The panel element according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that in the second direction normal to the utilization side (11) tongue (2) has at least one extension (27) and/or one second undercut (28).

4. The panel element according to claim 3, characterized in that the first projection (21) comprises the extension (27) and/or the second undercut (28).

5. The panel element according to claim 3 or 4, characterized in that the first undercut (23) and the second undercut (28) are merged.

6. The panel element according to any one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that when tongue (2) is connected with groove (3) of another similar panel element, tongue (2) and groove (3) have at least five contact points (41, 42, 43, 44, 45) for power transmission.

7. The panel element according to any one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that the second projection (22) of tongue (2) can be locked with the third projection (31) of groove (3) of the other similar panel element by an audible and noticeable click.

8. The panel element according to claim 7, characterized in that when tongue (2) is connected with groove (3) of another similar panel element the semi-plastic deformation is at least partially reconverted.

9. The panel element according to any one of the previous claims, characterized in that longitudinal sides (13, 14) and/or face sides (15, 16) are at least partially treated,

in particular sprayed, coated or the like, with a hydrophobic agent.

10. The panel element according to any one of the previous claims, characterized in that glue channels (61, 62) form when tongue (2) is connected with groove (3) of another similar panel element.